

Clarksburg library put on hold

■ Land issues are still unresolved, but officials say the project is not in jeopardy

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A County Council committee recommends delaying funding for the Clarksburg library by two years because several questions about the project, including land acquisition, still need to be resolved.

The library is not in jeopardy, it is just not ready to move forward yet, said Councilman Roger Berliner (D-Dist. 1) of Potomac, the lead member for libraries and cultural affairs on the council's Health and Human Services Committee.

"There are significant questions with respect to the site and the council [committee] did not feel comfortable approving a blank check," Berliner said in a phone interview Monday. "As soon as people have a firmer notion of what is necessary, I'm confident the council will embrace it."

The library is expected to cost \$17.1 mil-

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lion over a six-year period. Council staff recommended funding \$1.6 million for the planning and design of the library in the 2009 and 2010 budgets. However, committee members voted Monday to put the \$1.6 million on hold.

The primary source for funding the library would be development district taxes. A development district tax is charged to property owners within the district to pay for roads, parks and other amenities needed to support a community beyond what is normally required by a developer.

The County Council approved, but has not implemented, a Clarksburg Town Center Development District. Two others, for Clarksburg Village and Arora Hills, have been postponed while the council re-examines how the taxing districts are implemented or whether to abolish them.

Clarksburg Town Center developer Newland Communities of McLean, Va., was slated to donate land for the Clarksburg library when the development districts were created, but since the development districts have been postponed, Newland has not yet transferred the land to the county.

The library will be built in the Clarksburg Town Center retail center, but the final site plan for the retail center will not go before the county Planning Board until late spring at the earliest.

The delay in funding the library was not unexpected, said Tim DeArros, vice president of the Clarksburg Civic Association.

"Modification to the stages of the funding are not necessarily a bad thing," he said. "It all has to come in an appropriate order. We can't fund it if we don't know what we are funding yet."

The library funding is slated to come before the County Council in either late March or early April, Berliner said.